



Los Angeles County Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk

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July 10, 2014

TO: Supervisor Don Knabe, Chair
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FROM: Dean C. Logan, Registrar- Recorder/County Clerk

ANALYSIS OF ALLEGED DUPLICATE VOTER REGISTRATIONS IDENTIFIED DURING THE JUNE 3, 2014 STATEWIDE ELECTION

This report responds to your Board's direction on June 4, 2014 to "provide a report back to the Board following the 28-day canvass period on the alleged duplicate voter registrations identified during the June 3, 2014 Statewide Election."

Through this report, the Department seeks to assure your Board and the public of the integrity of the election and to confirm our efforts in reviewing and improving the County's voter file. The Department is committed to achieving its mission of providing fair, accessible and transparent election services for all voters and will thus, continue to maintain, enhance and develop the County's voter file data maintenance protocols.

This report provides summary information and analysis of alleged (or potential) duplicate voter records and identification of active voter records for individuals under the legal voting age presented to the Department by KNBC News just prior to the June 3, 2014 Statewide Election. In addition to responding to the data set presented by KNBC News, the report provides a contextual overview of ongoing voter list maintenance activities performed by the Department.

Background

On May 22, 2014 KNBC News Representative Joel Grover purchased a voter file (CDROM) from the Voter Information Section containing the voter registration file for Los Angeles County. The file contained only the publicly available data fields for individual voter records; confidential

data fields were not included (i.e. Social Security number, California Driver's License numbers, etc.). On May 30, 2014, Mr. Grover, through his producers, provided the Department with a database of 3,258 records that KNBC had identified, through independent analysis, as alleged duplicate voter records. During a subsequent filmed interview with the Registrar of Voters, Mr. Grover referenced additional KNBC analysis that identified possible active voter records for individuals who did not meet the minimum legal voting age of 18, some of whom were issued vote by mail ballots prior to the June 3, 2014 Statewide Election.

Context: County Voter List Maintenance Activities

With more than 4.8 million active registered voters, Los Angeles County is the largest and most complex voting jurisdiction in the country. Custody and maintenance of the County's voter file is a core function of the Department and involves myriad processes and activities associated with ensuring eligible citizens who register to vote are properly assigned to the appropriate jurisdictions and are provided information essential to their ability to exercise the voting franchise.

Identifying duplicate records is one of the more challenging processes of any list maintenance program. Los Angeles County's voter file includes numerous records from households that include members who have the same name, as well as records with common names and birth dates, but different addresses and state identification numbers. It can be quite difficult to determine, with certainty, whether two records are associated with the same person. Additionally, the community we serve is highly mobile and current registration processes necessitate an individual having to complete a new registration each time they have a change in residency. These dynamics make sustaining a hardened dataset challenging.

To address these challenges, the Department conducts ongoing and regularly scheduled list maintenance activities that identify and update invalid or inactive records while also ensuring a high degree of confidence in avoiding false-positive data matches that could potentially impinge on voter rights. These activities require securely matching the voter file to various available datasets, such as the United States Postal Service (USPS) National Change of Address (NCOA) Program and Address Correction Service (ACS), State Department of Health records, Social Security Administration death notification data and California State DMV records. A state duplicate voter list is also produced by the Secretary of State to identify potential duplicate records appearing in multiple counties. Each of these processes requires some level of manual staff intervention to confirm the validity of the duplicate before inactivating or removing a voter record.

The Department also performs a monthly internal, automated process that matches records based on criteria including last name, first name, date of birth, address and driver's license number to identify and flag possible duplicate records. During this automated matching process, if all the data points in the criteria match, the duplicate records are inactivated. If only some of the data points match (i.e. same name, address and date of birth, but different driver's license number), the system will flag the record as a duplicate, but the Department must first conduct a manual review comparing voter affidavits and signatures to determine whether the record is a confirmed duplicate prior to moving the record to inactive status.

Through these various activities, the Department maintains a routine and robust data hygiene program that seeks out records to be inactivated or cancelled based on identified duplicates or changes in voter eligibility status. The table below provides examples of the Department's numerous list maintenance activities and outcomes throughout the first half of 2014.

Maintenance Activity	Date	Change in records
Matching of health/death records	April 15, 2014	57,276 cancelled
NCOA residence address changes	March 1, 2014	115,116 updated
NCOA out of country cancelations	March 1, 2014	51,077 cancelled
Internal matching process	Jan. – June 2014	1,467 inactivated
Calvoter (State) matching process	Jan. – June 2014	1,147 inactivated

Pre-registration

California Election Code permits individuals who are 17 years of age to register to vote in advance of turning 18 years old. These pre-registrations then become active and eligible to vote once the 17 year old reaches legal voting age (18). Voter registrations received from 17 year olds are entered into the voter file and given a pending status. The Department's database contains two configuration flags that cross reference the voter's date of birth to determine when an individual is eligible to participate in an upcoming election. Prior to sending out the Sample Ballots and Vote By Mail (VBM) ballots for any given election, the database administrator runs this validation process and activates those voters who will be 18 years of age prior to the election date. Sample Ballots and VBMs are only sent to those individuals who are in active status in the voter file.

Analysis of KNBC data findings

The KNBC Investigation Team presented the Department with a data set that, based on their independent analysis, alleged to identify numerous voters who received multiple Vote by Mail ballots for the June 3, 2014 Statewide Election and other records identifying individuals under the age of 18 who were issued Vote by Mail ballots. The Department reviewed the records provided by KNBC to assess the concerns raised. We found that while the data appears to have identified some potential duplicate records in the voter file, there is no indication of a systemic flaw in the County's data maintenance procedures and not all allegations of duplicate registration can be confirmed.

Out of the 3,258 records (1,629 pairs) identified as potential duplicates in the KNBC dataset, only 20 pairs appear to meet more strict matching criteria as likely duplicates. Another 91 records had already been identified and inactivated through our standard list maintenance activities. The additional records do not meet the exact matching criteria used by the Department's automated duplicate matching protocols and require further manual review for final determination. Since key data elements do not match, these records require more detailed research and manual intervention prior to removal from the voter file to prevent disenfranchisement due to a false positive match.

Below is a summary of key findings from our review of the KNBC data file:

- There are currently 4,857,426 active registered voters in the countywide voter file and another 3,967,764 inactive voter records.
- KNBC identified 3,258 records as potential duplicates (1,629 pairs)
- 91 of the records provided were inactive voters (this means they would not receive any election materials).
- 2,414 records are missing vital information, like a Date of Birth (DOB) or Driver's License Number (DLN). Without out these key pieces of information it is difficult to determine, with a high level of confidence, that these records are duplicates.
- 20 pairs of records met strict match criteria for likely duplicates (e.g. full name, address, DOB, DLN).
- Another 38 pairs of records met most of the match criteria for likely duplicates except for the DLN (e.g. full name, address, DOB, different DLN).

As stated above, identifying duplicate records is an ongoing challenge that must take into consideration many pieces of data. Our review of the data suggests that a small number of the records provided by KNBC meet the stricter match criteria necessary to establish sufficient confidence to inactivate a voter record. For a majority of the records, there is information to suggest a potential duplicate. However, vital information like DOB or DLN are missing; making a high confidence match more difficult to establish. The Department is doing a thorough manual review of the records provided by KNBC and will use that information to assess and improve our list maintenance activities.

Impact on June 3, 2014 Statewide Election

Assertions made by KNBC that the results of the election might be impacted based on the alleged duplicates identified in their data set are unfounded and lack validity. All data maintenance and verification protocols were exercised for this election and, despite these perceived data irregularities; there was no imminent threat to the integrity of the election.

Duplicate Voter Records

In our review of the data, we found that 885 of the records identified as duplicates were voters who were issued VBM ballots; the remaining records provided by KNBC were voters assigned to vote at the polls. To monitor instances where a voter with a potential duplicate record voted two ballots in the election, all of the records provided by KNBC were matched to our voter history file for the June 3, 2014 Statewide Election. This analysis found no instances of potential duplicates returning multiple VBM ballots. In six cases possible duplicate voters may have cast two ballots at polling places. Further analysis, however, found that in these cases the six pairs of voter records did not meet strict match criteria, and at least one key piece of information was missing or did not match (e.g. the record contained no DOB, or the records had no DLN or a different DLN). Because of these omissions or variances, we cannot assume

that these records are actually examples of one voter voting twice. Instead, we must carefully review all documentation associated with the six voter records to determine if there is any indication of a single voter casting more than one ballot.

Records of Individuals under the Legal Voting Age

Regarding the active voter records identified by KNBC as not meeting the minimum voting age, our research and analysis confirmed this finding and identified that the automated flag intended to inactivate those records until the applicant is eligible had been inadvertently disabled during the processing stage of the associated voter registration forms. All VBM ballots issued to these pre-registered applicants were cancelled and in our post-election review, we confirmed that no one under the age of 18 cast a ballot in the election. The Department's database administrator is working with our Election Management System contractor to install additional software safeguards for this process to make it more difficult to inadvertently remove the inactive flags for these pre-registrants. The patch will be installed and tested prior to any future elections.

Conclusion

One person, one vote is the law. Intentionally voting twice or violating voter registration regulations is a crime punishable under state and federal law. Additionally, the voter registration application includes an affidavit that is signed under penalty of perjury. More importantly, whether at the polling place or when voting by mail, the individual casting a ballot must sign an oath attesting to their eligibility and compliance with voting laws, creating an artifact of identity that can be reviewed and investigated. These provisions of election law operate in parallel with voter file list maintenance activities to ensure the integrity of our elections process.

The County's official voter file is not just a mailing list or marketing file. The County must maintain each record based on its association with an individual's right to vote; making it more than just a data point. Any criteria applied that would inactivate or remove a voter from the file must be based on clear, consistent and confirmable information to establish the highest level of confidence. There is nothing more threatening to the integrity of our democratic process than the specter of administrative disenfranchisement. Recent examples of data-matching-based voter file purges in Florida and Colorado have demonstrated that such attempts negatively impact the sense of fairness and equality that is so critical to election integrity.

Future Efforts & Continuous Improvement

The County, through its legislative advocacy, and the Department, through its participation in national and statewide associations, is actively involved in promoting the completion of a more functional and robust statewide voter registration database. Latest indications from the Secretary of State set an implementation timeline for some time in 2016. We also continue to advocate for California's participation in interstate data exchanges to both improve voter list maintenance and to better identify eligible, unregistered citizens for outreach and education.

Pending those statewide enhancements, the Department is continuing its own efforts to enhance and expand voter file list maintenance. We are particularly interested in an effort

Orange County recently undertook data matching their voter file against credit header change of address data to initiate more timely updates to the voter file. A project team is scheduled to meet with the contractor that offers that service later this summer with the intention of assessing the potential for initiating a demonstration or pilot associated with the November Statewide General Election.

Should you have further questions on our analysis or information contained in this report, please contact me or your staff may contact Efrain Escobedo, Manager of Governmental and Legislative Affairs at (562) 462-2721 or by email at eescobedo@rrcc.lacounty.gov.